

<sup>6<sup>th</sup></sup>  
A  
COMPARISON  
BETWIXT  
PRAYER and PREACHING:

WHEREIN

The Excellencies and Advantages of  
both Ordinances are justly Stated,

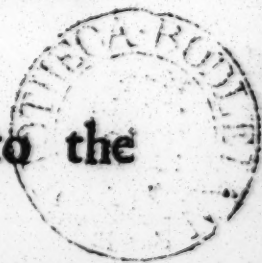
IN A

SERMON

Preach'd to a Country Auditory, A.D. 1707.

WITH A

Prefatory Discourse relating to the  
same Argument.



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By JOHN CARPENDER, A. M.  
*And late of Lincoln College in Oxford.*

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NOTES

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the atom.

2. The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the atom.

3. The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the atom.

4. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the atom.

5. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the atom.

6. The sixth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the atom.

7. The seventh part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the atom.

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THE  
PREFACE  
TO THE  
READER.

**T**HAT true Piety and  
Vertue should suffer by  
Preaching, and the Christian  
Religion lose its force and effi-  
cacy upon the Minds of Men by  
publick Instruction, may look in-  
deed, at first view, like Absur-  
dity and Solecism, yet Experience  
sheweth, that 'tis a certain and  
positive Truth. One would Ra-  
tionally

## The Preface to the Reader.

*tionally suppose, that this Sacred Ordinance of Heaven should correct and Reform the Vices and Disorders of the World, and reduce Mankind to a serious sence of their Duty. But the peculiar Infelicity is, That Sermons have sunk the price of Devotion, and done a real mischief to the Church of God. To qualify therefore the Proposition, which may look a little too severe upon that part of our Office which we stile Preaching, I mean no more, than that it has been Magnify'd and Extoll'd too much among us. Laban, the Syrian, was not more fond of his Images, those foolish Representations of Divinity, than some in this Age are of these Popular Discourses. If there is no Harangue to gratify their curious and wanton Humour, nothing else to entertain themselves,*



## The Preface to the Reader.

*themselves, than an Establish'd Form of Prayer, and a Legal Way of Worship, they will not oblige God Almighty with the honour of their company. Thus it comes to pass, that a dangerous species of Superstition insensibly steals upon us, and the Pulpit is esteem'd more Sacred and Venerable, than the Holy Altar.*

*The Design, therefore, of the following Discourse, is to rectify this Mistake, and to bring Men to a Discreet and Sober use of both Ordinances. A Rash and Extravagant preferring of one Duty to another has unhappily obstructed the Growth and Progress of many Graces, and been a fatal Medium to promote the Decay of Probity and Goodness, and indeed all Mo-*

## The Preface to the Reader.

ral Excellencies. *When this Extream began among us is not easie, at this distance, to determine. It is certain, that the Presbyterians were the first Persons in England that excessively doated upon the Exercise of Preaching, that noisie part of Divinity which now bears Sway in the World: They were the Men that decry'd and vilify'd our truly Primitive Liturgy, to make room for Long Prayers, and Seditious Lectures. And some that wou'd not be thought to be of their Party and Faction, have devoutly trod in their Steps, and imitated them in this particular.*

Dr. Edward's  
Preacher,  
p. 12, 13.

*A certain Author, that hath taken the liberty of Censuring the Writings of other Men, perhaps more worthy than himself, hath*

## The Preface to the Reader.

*hath not wrote with that Accuracy and Exactness, that Truth and Ingenuity, as not to lie open to Censure and Correction. He hath indeed, to maintain his own Argument, made bold with a Passage in the Writings of King Solomon, and interpreted and explain'd it in a new and unheard of manner. It appears (saith he) from what hath been suggested, that Preaching, in some Respects, hath the preference of Prayer; which is confirm'd to us by what the Wise Man saith, Keep thy Foot when thou goest to the House of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the Sacrifice of Fools, that is, Rather attend to the Voice of God in his Word, as 'tis explain'd to you, and thence learn your Duty, than offer*

*Ecc. 5. 1.*



## The Preface to the Reader.

the Sacrifice of Prayer and Praise. Here you see Preaching is preferr'd before Prayer by the Royal Preacher himself.

*I must freely profess, That I cannot see with mine own naked Eyes this preference of one Ordinance to another fairly deduc'd from this place, and therefore intreat and desire him to be so Kind and Charitable, as to help and assist me with his Spectacles. The Words are capable of a better Sense and Meaning than this Writer is pleas'd to put upon them. Junius and Termellius thus gloss upon them; Take care that you pay a more sincere and honest Obedience to the Law of God, which is expounded in his own House, than acquiesce in External Sacrifices, according*



## The Preface to the Reader.

ing to that of the Prophet  
*Samuel; Behold! to Obey is* 1 Sam. 15, 22.  
*better than Sacrifice, and to*  
*Hearken than the Fat of Rams.*  
*'Tis to be wish'd that the Re-*  
*verend Author before quoted,*  
*had strictly observ'd his one*  
*Rule, That we must never strain* p. 258.  
*Authority, and stretch a Writers*  
*Words beyond the true Inten-*  
*tion and Meaning of them.*  
*Now the true Meaning and In-*  
*tion of the Words of this Wise*  
*Son of David, and King of*  
*Israel, is to direct his Votary*  
*not to rest in the Outward*  
*Work, but in the Inward Power*  
*of Religion. It need not to be*  
*prov'd that he hath strain'd*  
*Authority, and stretch'd the*  
*Preacher's Words beyond the*  
*true Intention and Meaning of*  
*them; for every one must neces-*  
*sarily perceive, that he hath*  
*dealt*

## The Preface to the Reader.

dealt with this Text of Scripture, as Papists do with some others, that is, put it upon the Rack, and made it bow and bend unto his Humour.

I had said Page 19th of the following Discourse, That Preaching is excessively magnify'd, and even doated upon by the Men of the present Generation; that they have so strange and unaccountable love for the One Ordinance, as to quite overlook the Other. I have since perus'd Dr. Edward's Hearer, which doubtless was Compos'd for the Good and Edification of the People, and find upon Examination, that he hath rather confirm'd the Remark than contradicted it; for he Charitably calls upon them to learn of our Dissenting Brethren, (who  
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## The Preface to the Reader.

*it seems are a Blessing to the Nation) to correct that Fault which is so common among them, that is, in other Words, To Idolize the performance of the Pulpit. Among them there is (saith he) a different Apprehension of this matter, and therefore a different Practice, for they are perswaded that Preaching is the great Instrument of Conversion. They have such an extraordinary value for Preaching, and consequently Hearing, that the Publick Liturgy is in some measure vilify'd and despis'd.*

*The Common People are too apt to be guilty of the Extream of admiring Sermons, that we find they will not come to Church where there is nothing of this kind to entertain them.*  
Nay



## The Preface to the Reader.

*Nay the Book of Homilies, which was Compos'd in the beginning of the Reformation, by Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, Men of Approv'd Learning, and Exemplary Virtue, is not so engaging and operative as an Harangue with Chapter and Verse. Whether they learn this of the Dissenters, I will not pretend to decide the Question. However 'tis plain as any Demonstration in Euclid, that the Doctor wou'd have them to do so.*

*Our Preacher is very Witty and Pleasant upon the Head of Sleeping at Sermons. But a Jest is no Argument, and the Observation which he is pleas'd to make may, with advantage, be return'd upon him. We may observe (says he) that generally*



## The Preface to the Reader.

generally our Sleepers at *Sermons* are those that pretend to a great regard to the *Devotions* of the *Church*, and if they hold their Eyes open in the *Prayer-time*, they think they may be allow'd to shut them when the *Sermon* comes on. Besides, a Nap or two at *Sermon* is not inconvenient to shew the difference between *Common-Prayer* and *Preaching*. If they did not make this distinction betwixt these two, some wou'd be apt to Idolize the latter as much as these do the former. Accordingly to keep up the distinction, these Men set themselves to Sleep as soon as the *Pulpit-Work* begins, and thereby they render the time useless and unprofitable to themselves, and sometimes uneasy to others.

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## The Preface to the Reader.

O *foelix mater quæ tantum Oratorem peperit!* Indeed the Orator hath made a very notable Discovery, that they which Sleep at Sermons are such as pretend to a great regard to the Devotions of the Church. 'Tis Natural for every Christian to believe that those Persons which Sleep whilst the Word of God is deliver'd to them, do not consider the Truth of the Divine Presence, that they are under the immediate Inspection of Heaven. Men of this unhappy Character are so far from shewing any true Regard and Zeal for the Service of the Church, (as he Maliciously expresseth it) that they shew no manner of Deference and Respect for the Duties of Religion. Thus much I thought fit to say upon this Head of Prayer and Preaching.

## The Preface to the Reader.

I had pass'd over in Silence the above-mention'd Mistake of our Learned Doctor, had it been less Flagrant and Notarions. It had been easie for me to have Animadverted upon this Passage in the following Discourse, especially when I had so fair and proper an Occasion for it. But I conceiv'd it more eligible to perform that Work in the Preface, than in the Body of the Sermon.

Whether I have justly Stated the Comparison betwixt Prayer and Preaching, and fairly Represented the Excellencies and Advantages of Both Ordinances, must be left, at last, to the Judgment and Opinion of every Honest Reader. To his Determination therefore, I submit this Work, and desire him  
to



## The Preface to the Reader.

*to be Candid and Gentle in his Censures. I have only one thing more to add, and that is, That the Two Great Duties of our Religion before Specify'd, like Hippocrates's Twins, may live Friendly and Amicably together. Thus the Church of Christ will be Edify'd, and be equally Renown'd for Devotion and Wisdom.*

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A COMPARISON  
BETWIXT  
PRAYER and PREACHING.

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Acts x. 33.

*Now therefore are we all here present before  
God, to hear all things which are Commanded  
thee of God.*

**T**HESE Words which  
I have now read unto  
you, seem to argue a  
very good Temper and Dispo-  
sition in *Cornelius*, a *Jewish*  
*Profelite*, and in those Men that  
were with him. That which is  
remarkable in them is, that they  
were spoken unto *Simon Peter* v. 1, 2.  
by a Soldier, a Centurion of  
the *Italian Band*, and One that  
B was

was Religious towards God,  
and Charitable to the People.

The Substance of the Speech  
is this, That they were ready  
and prepar'd to hear the Hea-  
venly Message that was to be  
deliver'd unto them. *Imme-  
diately therefore I sent unto thee,*  
(says the new Convert) *and  
thou hast well done that thou  
art come.* He Congratulates  
his coming to his House, and  
expresses a sincere Joy that he  
finds a Diligent and Faithful  
Teacher to instruct him in the  
Doctrine of the Gospel. An  
Example that is truly Great  
and Illustrious, and every way  
Praise-worthy; and which most  
will applaud, but few have the  
Grace, or the Good Will, to  
imitate. This forwardness in  
*Cornelius* and his Company,  
we may Rationally suppose,  
was

( 3 )

was a mighty encouragement to the Apostle to do his Duty, to Preach and to dispense the Word unto them.

The two Great Ordinances that the Almighty hath Instituted in his Church, for the Eternal Good and Benefit of Mankind, are *Prayer* and *Preaching*. These are Duties which are Commanded of God; and consequently are seriously to be Regarded by us. To these we are to give the most Solemn Attendance, and the Reason is, because they are enjoy'd by a Superior Being, and an Omission in this Case wou'd be extreamly inexcusable. Now therefore are we all here present in the sight of God, &c. A Parallel place to this is in *Ezekiel*, where the Lord speaks to the Prophet,



Chap. 3. 71. *Son of Man, I have made thee a Watchman unto the House of Israel; therefore hear the Word at my Mouth, and give them Warning.*

From the Words I observe these Two Particulars.

*First*, That the Providence of God hath appointed the Evangelical Ordinances, as Spiritual Means of Grace, and Blessed Instruments of our common Happiness and Salvation. This is deducible from the latter Clause of the Verse, — *all things which are Com-manded.*

*Secondly*, That since they are Ordain'd for our present and future Good, and are kindly design'd as Moral Vehicles to bring us to Heaven, we shou'd be present at them, and consider it as our indispensable Duty



( 5 )

Duty to hear; to attend without weariness of Spirit, remissness of Zeal, and coldness of Devotion.

*First, That the Providence of God hath appointed the Evangelical Ordinances, as Spiritual Means of Grace, and Blessed Instruments of our common Happiness and Salvation. This is deducible from the latter Clause of the Verse, — all things which are Com-  
manded, i. e. which are of Divine Institution.* 'Tis true, in the Text One only Ordinance is mention'd, but that does not exclude, but inferr the Obligation of the rest. The *Sacraments of Baptism and the Lords-Supper*, are, in the Language of our *Church-Catechism*, generally necessary to Salvation, such as regenerate the

Human Nature, and strengthen and refresh the Souls of Christians. The Holy Man went upon this sure Ground, That his Instructor would deliver no Doctrine unto him, but what was of unquestionable Truth, and founded upon infallible unerring Revelation. He wisely consider'd, That Error and Falsehood were Vices opposite to his enlighten'd Nature; and that he had sat for a long space of Time under the uncomfortable shade and darkness of Gentilism. He did not depend upon the Uncertainty of Tradition, the Authority of the Church, or the Confidence and Presumption of a Council; he took care in the first place to be satisfy'd in his Mind that the Doctrine taught was commanded of God, before he assented

sented unto it. This indeed is Argument and Demonstration, that he was a Man of an unbiass'd Honesty and Vertue, and one that Consulted, above all things, the Spiritual Good of his Soul, and was Ambitious of nothing else but the knowledge of the saying Truths of the Gospel.

The end that the Sovereign Creator propos'd to himself in appointing the Ordinances, such as *Prayer, Preaching, the Sacraments, &c.* is this, to promote our Eternal Good and Happiness, and by these Prudent Methods to bring us to Heaven. For the Confirmation of this Point, let us have recourse to the Inspir'd Apostle, his true and genuine Writings. *The Gospel of Christ* Rom. i. 16.  
*(saith he) is the Power of God*



unto Salvation, to every one that believeth. We may see here what Force and Power St. Paul attributes to the Ministry of the Word. For he speaks not of any secret Revelation (as Marlorat glosseth it (a), but of a loud and vocal Preaching.

(a) In Loc.

1 Cor. i. 18. So elsewhere,—The Preaching of the Cross is unto us which are sav'd, the Power of God, i. e. 'tis the Instrument which he makes use of to convert the Heart, to break the stubbornness of Sin, and to reduce Sinners to Sobriety and good Temper. In the History of the Acts we chap. 4. v. 4. read, That five Thousand, a vast Multitude, believ'd, and were Converted at the Sermon of St. Peter. The vain World may stile this sacred Ordinance the Foolishness of Preaching, and the Men of Liberty and Pleasure,

Pleasure, that are void of sound Reason, and right Judgment, laugh at it as a Weak and Contemptible Ministry, because they feel not the Vigour and Efficacy of it upon their Consciencés. But we *Christians* are sensible, That the designation of it is for our everlasting Good and Benefit. Herein the Deity is pleas'd to display his Gracious Wisdom, Mercy, and Goodness to the Sons of Men, It is the Sovereign I Cor. i. 7. 21. Remedy appointed by God to save them that believe, and to beget Faith and Knowledge.

It is not necessary in this place to enquire, Whether Divine Providence cou'd save Mankind without these Spiritual Ordinances, that is, by any other way than this of *Preaching and Instruction*: 'Tis certain

certain that God can Teach and Instruct without the External Ministry. For the due accomplishment of his Ends, he is not necessarily ty'd to Means, for doubtless he can act without them; yet still we affirm, That the Ministry of the *Word* and *Sacraments* is according to the standing Law of *Providence*, and that Salvation is not operative and effectual, exclusive of them. My meaning is plainly this, That the Ordinances of the *Catholick Church*, are the Means that God hath Ordain'd for Building and Perfecting the Saints, and for Advancing his own Glory, and in a Subordinate Sense, the Happiness of his Creatures. *I charge thee* (says the Inspir'd Apostle to his Son *Timothy*) *to Preach the Word, to be instant*



(( 11 ))

stant in Season and out of Season. He urges upon him the necessity of this Duty, and gives a special Charge to the Church of *Thessalonica*, not to despise it. For 'tis an Ordinance that hath God for its Author, and is design'd for the Edifying the Body of Christ. 'Tis the Observation of our Judicious Mr. Hooker, (b) That *Sermons are not the only Preaching which doth save Souls. The Apostles Preach'd (saith he) as well when they wrote, as when they spake the Gospel of Christ; and our usual Publick Reading of the Word of God for the Peoples Instruction is Preaching. The Reading of Holy Writ is a second kind of Preaching. For* thus we may the boldier speak, being strengthen'd with the Example of so Reverend a Prelate,

1 Ep. 5. 20.

Eph. 4. 12.

(b) Eccl. Pol.

lib. 5. p. 222.

ib. p. 213.

Acts 15. 21.

Ἐκ γὰρ πάντων  
ἀρχαίων.

p. 221.

late, St. James of Jerusalem, who saith, That Moses, from the time of Ancient Generations and Ages long since past, had, among the Cities of the Gentiles, them that Preach'd him, in that he was read every Sabbath-day; for so of necessity it must be meant, in as much as we know that the Jews have always had their Weekly Readings of the Law; but that they always had, in like manner their Weekly Sermons upon some part of the Law, we no where find. And elsewhere —.

We have no other Word of God but the Scriptures, the end of which is to Save, Convert, and Edify. The way for all Men to be Sav'd, is by the knowledge of that Truth which the Word hath taught. And since Eternal Life is a thing of  
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it self Communicable to all, it becometh that the Word of God, the necessary mean thereto, be so likewise. It no otherwise serves, than only in the Nature of a Doctrinal Instrument; it Saveth because it makes Wise to Salvation.

*The Word of God is Quick* chap. 4. v. 12.  
*and Powerful* (saith the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews) *and sharper than any two edged Sword.* 'Tis lively and mighty in Operation, and, one wou'd think, somewhat more than a dead Letter, a nose of Wax, and a senseless Character. 'Tis the Grand Charter of our Happiness and Salvation. But there are a Generation of Men in the World, who, by their heedless Mistakes, have sunk the Price and Estimation of Scripture; and by overvaluing



a part have destroy'd the whole. They never hear Sentence which mentions the Word, or Divine Writ, (says the Learned Writer before quoted) but forthwith their Glosses upon it are the Word Preach'd, the Scripture Explain'd or Deliver'd to us in Sermons. These Discourses, according to their feeble Understanding, are that Word of God, which alone hath vital Influence, the dangerous Sequel of which Construction I wish they did more attentively Weigh and Consider. Are not these for the most part Exercises of Wit, and Human Invention? Do they not oftentimes Taste too much of that corrupt Fountain from which they flow? In our Speech of most Holy Things, our frail and sickly Affections are frequently

quently mingled. As to our Sermons, be they never so sound and perfect, yet they are not in strict Propriety of Language God's Word, as the Sermons of the Prophets were. They are in an ambiguous Sense his Word, because 'tis commonly the Subject whereof they treat, and must be the Rule whereby they are fram'd. We therefore are ready to cry out with the Apostle, *How Beautiful are the Feet of them which Preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad Tidings of good Things.* *Rom. 10. 15.*

'Tis the Publishing the saving Truths of God unto the People. 'Tis opening the Gate of Heaven unto them, and shewing them the Path of Life and Happiness.

There is another Evangelical Ordinance, which, in this Age,

Age, is decry'd by some that pretend to the Spirit, and that is *Prayer*. 'Tis a Duty so Essential to *Religion*, and so Necessary a part of *Worship*, that we are scarce *Christians* without it. Let others call it a poor beggarly Ceremony, and think themselves in a State of Perfection, and so above the use of this Carnal Ordinance, we are better instructed in the Nature of this Office, and know that 'tis a Converting Ritual, and a Mean appointed for the obtaining Pardon of Sin, and the Graces of the blessed Spirit. Among the things which are Commanded of God, this is One, and that not the least. 'Tis that Sacred Ordinance whereby we draw near to the Throne of Grace, and request those things which are Necessary



fary and Convenient. 'Tis an Act of the Practical Reason, or (c) the Conference of a Devout and Pious Mind with Heaven. We must make use of this Holy Duty as long as we continue Members of the *Militant Church*. None are exempted from this High and Excellent Office of Religion ; the Performance of it is equally bound upon the Good and Bad, the Vertuous and Prophanes, *i. e.* all Orders and Degrees of Men in the World. It appears then, by what hath been said, that both *Prayer* and *Preaching* are Ordinances appointed for our Spiritual Good and Benefit, and both of singular Use in the Church of God. They are, by the Blessing of Almighty God, Instrumental to the Conversion and Happiness of Sinners.

(c)  
*Dan. Tilen.*  
*Syntag. cap.*  
*49. de preca-*  
*tione, p. 786.*

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What *St. Paul* saith of the Civil Magistrate is applicable to the *Ecclesiastick*, *He is the Minister of God to thee for good.* He is indeed furnish'd with both Gifts, I mean of *Prayer* and *Preaching*, and exercises them for the Edification of those that are committed to his Charge and Conduct. 'Tis not safe positively to determine, which is the most Beneficial and Edifying Duty. If we shew our Love and Esteem for one Ordinance, we shall be sure to displease and anger those that have a peculiar liking for the other. 'Tis sufficient to say, That they are both excellent beyond Comparison. We will therefore, to avoid giving Offence to either Party, walk in the middle Path, and give the Ordinances the Honour which they deserve,

*Rom. 13. 4.*

deserve, and which they justly claim for their Divine Institution.

I further Remark upon this Head, That we ought not to prefer One Ordinance to another, but to have an equal Respect and Veneration for Both. There is too much cause to give this necessary Caution, especially in this Age wherein we Live. God, 'tis true, hath appointed the Ordinances for our everlasting Good and Benefit, but not surely to be the unhappy Subject of Strife and Contention. He wou'd not have the one Duty to jostle out the other, and in all things to maintain the pre-eminence. *Prayer*, which is the primary and chief part of Religion, and the most sublime, and the most excellent Duty, about which Men are conversant,



is decry'd as a low and weak Ceremony, and represented as an old Superannuated Branch of *Christianity*. 'Tis a sad Truth that I am about to speak, That the *Church-Prayers* have very few Admirers, and that there are a very small number that can truly discern the admirable Beauty, Order, and Decency of our Devotional Exercises. That 'tis *Common-Prayer*, is reason enough for 'em to ridicule and despise it. And for the same reason they may condemn the Light of the Sun, that Universal Comfort and Blessing of Life, because 'tis Common and of such diffusive Influence. Nay, they will not allow it to be the Ordinance of God, so shameful, base, and low an Opinion have they of its Goodness and Excellence. But *Preaching* is  
excessively

excessively magnify'd, and even doated upon by the Men of the present Generation; they have so strange and unaccountable Love for the One Ordinance, as quite to over-look the Other. As if it was, what really 'tis not, the best Gift, and the most edifying Exercise, they have coveted earnestly after it, and express'd a Zeal not according to Knowledge. This Criminal Fondness for *Sermons* is a piece of Superstition, tho', perhaps, the Persons that are Guilty, do not in the least suspect it in themselves and their Actions. A Learned Father of our Church hath along ago observ'd, (d) *That bearing of the Word was grown into such request, that it had got the start of all the other Parts of God's Service.* Truly the Remark is just and pertinent, and exactly

(d)  
Bp. Andrew's  
Sermon on  
Jam. I. 22.  
p. 756, 757.

hits the Humour of this Age, and is a Satyr upon our Practice. The Vanity and Superstition of the World hath made it the great and only Worship of God. *Religion* now lies in nothing else but hearing of *Sermons*, such *Bigotry* is there to be found among us. An Oration from the Pulpit is extoll'd and admir'd to that degree, that *Prayer*, which is the great Work of Heaven, of Saints, of Angels, is vilify'd and despis'd, and not to be esteem'd worthy to be compar'd with it. *For Proof whereof* (says the Bishop before cited) *take this very place, the House of God, which now you see pretty well replenish'd, come at any other Parts of the Service of God, (Parts, I say, of the Service of God no less than this) you shall find it in a manner*

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ner empty and desolate. This is sufficient Proof that *Preaching* is thought to be the most eminent part of our Duty, and to Challenge the chief place in the *Ecclesiastical Employments*.

A late Writer (e) upon this Head observes, *That 'tis the first Office mention'd in the Commission which our Blessed Saviour*

(e)  
Dr. *Lawson's*  
Preacher,

P. 3.  
Mat. 28. 19.  
Mark 16. 15.

*our gave to his Apostles. Go ye into all the World, and Preach the Gospel to every Creature.*

In the Original 'tis *κηρύσσειν*, which signifies to cry and proclaim a thing to the Ears of another. This indeed is said to raise the Credit of Publick Instruction, but to sink the Reputation of another no less Eminent Branch of our Office.

He is pleas'd to acquaint us, *That this Ordinance of God met with a very early Dislike and Contempt in the World.* The

*Racovian Catechism* is quoted, as saying with an Air of Contempt, *That there is no use of Preaching since the Conversion of the Gentiles, and the Settlement of Christianity among us.* 'Tis freely acknowledg'd, that this Institution was, at its first appearance, accounted Foolishness by the great Pretenders to Worldly Wisdom. Therefore the Inspir'd Apostle had just cause to say, *Despise not Prophecysings.* But we find by Experience, that the Tables are turn'd, and the Disesteem is laid upon the Ministry of *Prayer.* The *Sermon* is extoll'd even to the depression of the *Service*, and Men love to have their Ears tickled with Sound, tho' not their Hearts inflam'd with Devotion. *Others tell us* (saith he) *that we ought not to appear so Concernedly for Preaching, for*  
 'tis

'tis probable that this is done to Vilify the Prayers of the Church; and in time it may be fear'd, that Preaching will exclude the Prayers. There is no fear of any such thing, and that for this reason, because all Sober Persons of our *Communion*, who are for *Preaching*, are also as much, or more for *Praying*.

To the latter part of which Assertion I beg leave to reply, That our Fear is rational, just, and well-Grounded, and the Reason is obvious, because the People (who are doubtless a part of our *Communion*) for the most part do not come till the *Prayers* are over; or if they chance to drop into our Religious Assemblies before the appointed Psalms and Lessons, they are like a Log of Wood, without Spiritual Life and Motion,



Motion, till the Man of God ascends the *Rostrum*, and awakens their Zeal and Vigour. The common Saying that passes among the Vulgar, is, *That they love to hear a good Sermon, edifying Preaching.* And truly we shou'd not blame them, if they wou'd shew their love and affection for the *Prayers* too. We shou'd be glad to find them as ready to Pray as to Hear, when they are present before God in the Beauty of Holiness. But when One Ordinance shall be excessively admir'd, and even to Superstition applauded by the Senseless Multitude, and the Other, tho' equally useful and necessary in the Church of Christ, neglected and disparag'd; this gives Scandal and Offence to the better part of Mankind, and indeed is just matter for Complaint.

It

It wou'd raise our Indignation and Resentment to see Men put an extraordinary Price upon One Duty, and shew no manner of Deference and Respect to another. This looks as if they had a real design to invert our Saviour's Words, and make his House, not *the House of Prayer*, but of *Preaching*. What is this but to turn the whole Body of Gods Worship into an Ear, and to make the *Preaching* of the Word the chief and principal Exercise of a Christian? Of Old a Disciple of *Jesus* was known by the bending of the Knee in *Prayer*, and a reverent Esteem for *Holy Scripture*. In these Days of *Moderation* and *Indifferency* the Votary is distinguish'd by a fond Criminal Love for an Extemporary Harangue, and it must be esteem'd

a Nobler Work than administering one of the *Evangelical Sacraments*. This must be too according to St. *Paul's* Judgment. Nay further, that 'tis especially design'd, and more fitted for the Conversion of Men, and preferr'd to Works of Charity and Alms-Deeds.

1 Cor. 1. 17.

Acts 6. 2.

v. 4.  
ejusdem cap.

Were not Comparisons odious, I cou'd referr them to a Text, where *Prayer* has the preheminance of the *Ministry* of the Word. This, in the Words of King *Solomon*, is an evil Disease under the Sun, which hath possess'd the World, and is a great Illusion of our Ghostly Enemy, the *Devil*; who, when he cannot draw us wholly from the Worship of *God*, maketh us single out some one part of the rest, and to be Superstitiously Conceited of it, to make much of it, and

to



to magnifie it highly ; nay only with neglect, and as if it were with some Disgrace to all besides it. Now this is a manifest Impeachment of the Goodness and Wisdom of *God*, who hath appointed all the rest, as well as this Ordinance, and wou'd have us to make Conscience of Both Duties of *Religion*. The Consequence of separating one from the other is this, that *God* did act well and wisely in the Institution of that One, but not in the appointment of the rest. Altho' we cannot turn the Stream and Torrent of the Time, and bring Men to a Sober use of Both Ordinances, yet we may Condemn this irregular Love as a great Crime, and a bad Extream. We may say with a becoming force, that things ought not so to be.

Both

Both these are the Ordinances of Heaven and both good in their proper Seasons. When we are in the Holy Temple we must Hear and Pray, and be vers'd in Both Duties. We must not dash one Religious Office against another; and, as it were, send Challenges betwixt them. We shou'd not make *Religion* an *Auricular Profession*, a meer *Sedentary* thing, sit still and hear a Sermon, and think to be sav'd for so doing; something more is requir'd on our Parts, and that is, to call on the Name of the Lord. If therefore we wou'd receive any Benefit from the Sacred Ordinances of *God*, we must take care not to make unlawful and unequal Comparisons of them, but have a due Esteem and Deference for Both these Instru-

Instruments of our Common Happiness and Salvation.

These Men, indeed, who are concern'd in this Head of Discourse, are of a vitiated Palate, have a bad taste in the matters of *Religion*. 'Tis true, they can relish something that may keep them in some sense of *Piety* and *Vertue*; but as for what is Productive of the Spirit, and Life of it, they are of too weak a Constitution to digest. To have the Affections rais'd into an ardent Praising of *God's* Goodness and Love to Mankind, and an earnest, fervent Desire of assisting Grace, is what they can have no delight in, is too strong Nourishment for them: But yet these being admonished, may, in some time, know their Error, and consequently Reform it, and at last be more firmly



firmly cemented into *Piety*. They are not in the least in so bad a case as those who, when at *Church*, neglect *Prayer*, but will not hear the Voice of the Charmer, Charm he never so wisely. These doubtless are guilty of the Sin of the *Jews* under the Old Dispensation. *They refus'd to hearken*, (says the Prophet of that People) *and pull'd away the Shoulder, and stop'd their Ears that they shou'd not hear: yea, they made their Hearts as an Adamant-Stone*; the property of which is an impenetrable hardness, lest they shou'd hear the Law, and the Words which were indicted by the Holy Spirit. St. *Austin* indeed came Prejudic'd against the Word, more out of a desire to Ridicule, (f) than to be Instructed by it, yet a spark happily caught hold

*Zech.* 7. 11,  
12.

(f)  
*Confess.*  
*lib. 3. cap. 5.*

hold of him, which increas'd to as burning and shining a Light as any of the Fathers So that these are not in a quite desperate State and Condition. There may be some hopes left still of doing them good: A Voice from Heaven may strike them with *Devotion*, and bring them to a serious Sense of their Duty. But when Men are Obstinate resolv'd not to come near a Christian Assembly, their Nature plainly shews that they can have no Complacency in their Conversation in Heaven; but that as they are altogether taken up with Unchristian Rebels, so they shall have enough of them, *i. e.* with Damned Spirits to all Eternity hereafter. But these last sort of Men will more properly fall under our other General Head, *viz.*

Secondly, The Second Particular

cular is this, namely, That since the Ordinances are design'd for our present and future Good, and are kindly intended, as *Moral Vehicles*, to bring us to Heaven, we shou'd be present at them, and look upon it as our indispensable Duty to hear, to attend without weariness of *Spirit*, remissness of *Zeal*, and coldness of *Devotion*. If they are Commanded of God, and are, by the assisting Grace of Heaven, the means of Peace and Reconciliation, then the Inference is just and reasonable, that we shou'd upon all Occasions frequent them. There is a very Instructive Passage in

by

comp. o. 3;  
4, 6.



by *Ezra* the Priest. 'Tis said  
in exprefs Terms, *That the Ears*  
*of all the People were attentive*  
*unto the Book of the Law*, i. e.  
the Authentick, and Indubi-  
table Hand-Writing of the  
Prophet *Moses*. He stood

ἐν βήματι ἐξήκου, upon a Pulpit

of Wood, † made for the

purpose, and the Congrega-

tion were forward to hear,

and to be instructed; Nay, that

which is more remarkable, and

which may serve to Condemn

the contrary Practice of our

lukewarm Age, they lifted up

their Hands, bow'd their Heads,

and Worship'd the Lord with

their Faces to the Ground,

which is Demonstration, that

they were not only for the Ex-

position of the Law, but for

Prayer too. We are exhorted

not to forsake the Assembling

of our selves together, i. e, to

D 2 attend

Locus dicei-  
di in concione  
aut iudicio  
tribunali, un-  
de apud Plut.

or ἀπὸ τοῦ  
βήματος  
Concionato-  
res. Jo. Scap.  
in Verbul,  
Barvov

Heb. 10. 25

Acts 8: 56.

attend upon the Ordinances, that our profiting may appear. The Holy Evangelist Remarks, *That when Philip, the Deacon, went down to an Eminent City of Samaria (which Josephus, the Jewish Historian, stiles Sebaste) and Preach'd Christ unto them, that is, his Doctrine of Repentance and Remission of Sins, the People with one accord gave heed unto those things which he spake. They did not Sleep when the Heavenly Message was deliver'd unto them, and so lose the Spiritual Benefit of the Word Preach'd, but were Awake, Serious, and Attentive. How does this Example Condemn too many among us, that scarce take so sound a Repose in their own Private Families, as in the Publick Congregation, in the Temple, the place of Worship! The Instance of*  
*Entychus*

*Entychus* that fell into a deep Acts 20.  
 Sleep, whilst *St. Paul* was long 7, 8, 9.  
 Preaching, is remember'd upon  
 this occasion. But there is no  
 reason for us to be severe upon  
 his Drowsiness, which, all Cir-  
 cumstances duly weigh'd, was  
 a very pardonable Infirmary;  
 nay, *St. Luke* that wrote the  
 History seems to excuse him.  
 'Tis no surprize that he shou'd  
 sink down with Sleep at such  
 an unseasonable time of Night,  
 and let go the Instructions of  
 the Apostle. But what Apo-  
 logy can be made for them that  
 can be Vigilant and Attentive  
 when they are present at the  
 Diversions of the *Theater*, the  
 Mirth and Jollity of a *Feast*,  
 or *Banquet*, (g) but cannot sit  
 out, at God's Word, one poor  
 Hour or half, without a Nod,  
 or Slumber? King *Solomon* in-  
 structs us well in his *Recantati-*

(g)  
 Pudeat nos  
 nostre iner-  
 tia qui ne in  
 ore quidem  
 verbum Domi-  
 ni audimus :  
 immo si ali-  
 quoties audire  
 contingat, vix  
 horam aut di-  
 midiam pa-  
 tienter audi-  
 mus : omnis  
 mora in con-  
 cionibus no-  
 bis molestissi-  
 ma, ac in con-  
 vivis aut  
 spectaculis  
 ludicris nulla  
 satis longa  
 est ; nemo in  
 his dormit,  
 nemo frigus  
 aut æstus  
 cavetur, ut  
 in concioni-  
 bus sacris,  
 &c.  
 Aug. Mart.  
 in Loc.



*on Sermon*, that is, the Book of *Ecclesiastes*. Be more ready to hear (says he) than to give the *Sacrifice of Fools*, for they consider not that they do evil. We should indeed be swift to hear, not every idle Tale, vain Report, and useless Business, but the Word of God, which is able to save our Souls. A Devout and Religious Attendance upon the *Ministerial Ordinances* is better, and more pleasing to Almighty God, than the pursuit of *Vanity, Impertinence, Sport, and Recreation*. To be engag'd in Talk, to indulge *Laughter*, and to consume the precious Time in *Sin and Folly*, when God is speaking unto us by his Messenger, and setting before our Eyes the Great and Important matter of Life and Death; what is this but to affront the Divine Majesty,

sty, and to provoke his Anger and Indignation against us? We are apt to interpret it a sign of Disregard, and a Slight and Contempt of our Words, when a Man turns his Face from us, and whilst we are speaking, holds a Discourse with another. And will not that Being, which is Superior unto us, think we highly resent our undutiful Carriage towards Him, and esteem it a piece of saucy Rudeness to Laugh in His Presence, and to divert our selves another way, especially when he is speaking to us the Words of Life and Salvation? *Job* reckons it as no small Honour done to him, when he was in Prosperity, and encompass'd on ev'ry side with the Blessings of Heaven, that *Men gave ear unto him, and kept Silence at his Counsel.* We read

*Job. 29. 21.*

Chap. 16. 14.

in the History of the *Acts* of the Apostles, that *Lydia*, a *Seller of Purple*, of the City of *Thyatira*, attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul, and gave convincing demonstration that his *Preaching* was not to her (as 'tis to many) a dead Letter, a sounding Brass, a tinkling Cymbal, unable to improve and edify. This is written for Admonition, that we shou'd in like manner be affected, and hear the sound of the Gospel with willingness and pleasure. 'Tis the prudent Ear that getteth Knowledge, and the wise Heart that is truly edify'd, and receives Instruction. But the Heart of the Foolish is like a Cart wheel, and his Thoughts are like a rowling Axel-tree.

Ecclesi. 33. 5.

The Sense of Hearing may be said, in some sort, to be more Noble and Excellent than that



that of a Vision; for thro' this Gate *Discipline* and *Instruction* pass to the Mind. By this outward Sensation Speech (which is the Interpreter of Thought, and the Bond of Society and Commerce) is convey'd unto us. By the help and assistance of Hearing, a Man Born Blind may be render'd capable of *Instruction*. But whosoever is Deaf from his Nativity, is no Subject of *Morality* and *Discipline*. He may, 'tis true, be here present before God, but 'tis impossible for him to Hear the things which are Comman- ded. *The Hearing Ear* (as the Wise Man accurately observes) *is made useful and convenient for the conveyance of Knowledge and Understanding.* It is so fram'd by the Omnipotent *Architect*; and why then do we Preach to broken Vessels, to those

those that hold no *Knowledge*,  
and let out as fast as we pour  
in *Instruction*?

Why do we speak to Dead  
Men that hear us not, to whom  
*Doctrine* is as Fetters on the  
Feet, and like Manacles on the  
Right-hand? Why do we spend  
our Breath, use our Rhetorick  
and Eloquence, and by soft  
Words, and a perswasive Force  
of Oratory declare the Truths  
that concern their Everlasting  
Good and Happiness, if they  
will not hear them? Why do  
we spread wide open the Gates  
of *Heaven*, if they will not en-  
ter? In order to the Edifica-  
tion of the Members of the  
*Christian Church*, Two things  
are extreamly requisite, *Remem-  
brance* and *Meditation*; without  
these Hearing is to little pur-  
pose. What signifies your  
Hearing, when you presently  
forget

forget what was deliver'd unto you, and suffer the Pleasures and Profits of the World to take Possession of your Hearts? It was the Complaint of the Prophet *Ezekiel*; *The People* Ezek. 33, 31. *cometh and sit before thee, and hear thy Words, but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness.* It seems they came to Church in great Bands and Companies, and sat there in great Decency and Order, and look'd, it may be, stedfastly upon the *Preacher*, but the Unhappiness was, that they were no sooner out of Doors, but that they honestly let the good Instructions go, and follow'd their *Secular Affairs* as formerly. This is indeed the Reverse and Counterpart of *St. James*, to be Hearers of the Word and not Doers, deceiving our own selves, putting a Cheat and Fallacy upon  
our



our Immortal Spirits. When the Word Preach'd enters in at one Ear, and goes out at the other, and Men come to the House of God to take in only Sound, 'tis no Wonder or Surprise that they return empty, without Edification.

That therefore we may be Benefited by the Ordinances of God, and be built up in our most *Holy Faith and Religion*, let us consider that Rule of the *Heb. 2. 1, 2.* Apostle; therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, *μὴ ποτε παραφύσιν*, *ne forte pereffluamus*, lest we shou'd run out as Leaky Vessels, which do not retain the Liquor that is infus'd (*b*) into them, as 'tis in the Original, and Margin of our Bibles. For if the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every Transgression and Disobedience

(*b*)  
Est Metapho-  
ra, quam alij  
sumptam pu-  
rant à vase  
perfluente,  
alij ab aqua  
Effluente. Sen.

Disobedience receiv'd a just  
 Recompence of Reward, how  
 shall we escape if we neglect  
 so great Salvation? The Word  
 which we Preach is indeed the  
 Instrument of Life, and the  
 Ordinance which he hath kind-  
 ly appointed for our Eternal  
 Good and Benefit The An-  
 gel acquainted *Cornelius*, the  
 first-Fruit of the *Gentile Con-*  
*version*, That Peter shou'd tell  
 him Words, whereby he and all  
 his House shou'd be Sav'd.  
 An Eminent Commendation,  
 doubtless, of the Outward  
 Ministry! If we despise this  
 part of *Religion*, and grow  
 Cold and Careless in our Du-  
 ty, we shall one Day be Re-  
 sponsible for this Neglect. As  
 long as we Live, we must keep  
 close to the Ordinances of the  
 Gospel, *Prayer*, *Preaching*, the  
*Lord's-Supper*; and nothing  
 can

sus est, ne au-  
 dita nobis ex-  
 cidant 'e me-  
 moria: ne si-  
 mus instar  
 dolij pertusi  
 aut rimosi,  
 quod liquo-  
 rem infusum  
 non retinet.  
 G. Estius in  
 Loc.

can excuse our Neglect, if it be Wilful and Presumptuous. Let us take care then that we refuse not Him that speaketh from Heaven unto us. The Blessed Founder of our Institution hath Ordain'd *Pastors* and *Teachers* for the Work of the *Ministry*: They are his *Servants* and *Ministers*, and are Qualify'd with Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, to discharge their Duty well and becomingly. To these we must submit, and hear with readiness all their good Instructions which they bring from their Great Lord and Master.

In hearing the things which are Commanded of God, we shou'd nicely observe this Rule, (with which I shall conclude) That we come to the Word with a Spiritual Appetite, a Longing and Vehement Desire. There is an absolute Necessity of pressing this Rule upon Mens Hearts and Consciences. Some repair to the House of God, as Sickly and Distemper'd People do to a Feast, or Banquet. They shew themselves indeed, but their Appetite is Feverish and Disorder'd. The Word of Life has no relish with them. Such as these have no Interest



Interest in that Promise of Christ, *Matth. 5. 6.*  
*Blessed are they which do Hunger*  
*and Thirst after Righteousness, for*  
*they shall be fill'd.* 'Tis to be wish'd

that there were such Divine Brea-  
 things in us, as there were of Old  
 in the Royal Prophets. *As the* *Psalms 42. 1.*

*Hart panteth after the Water Brooks,*  
*so panteth my Soul after thee, O God.*

But alas! we may complain in the  
 Bitterness of our Soul, that the  
 Famine of the Word turns into a  
 Surfeit. Men are weary of the

Sacred Ordinances; say with those *Amos 8. 5.*  
 in the Prophet, *When will the Sab-*  
*bath be over, that we may sell Corn,*  
*and set forth Wheat?* 'Tis a fatal

Symptom, when their Souls are  
 lean under the Evangelical Dispen-  
 sation, and starv'd in the midst of  
 Plenty. This is a Sensible Argu-  
 ment, that they have no love for  
 these Spiritual Provisions, when  
 they loath and abhor 'em. Let

others then Nauseate the Simplici-  
 ty of the Gospel, we can joyn with  
 David, the Sweet-Singer of Israel, *Psalms 119.*

*That 'tis Sweet to our Taste, yea,* *103.*  
*Sweeter than Honey to our Mouth.*

We can come to the Word with an  
 intense and vehement Desire, with-  
 out

out any Prejudices and Prepossession  
 ons. O! then let us not slight the  
 Seasons and Opportunities where  
 by we may be Edify'd, but grow  
 in Grace as we do in Stature, and  
 every Day improve in the Know-  
 ledge of our Lord and Saviour,  
*Jesus Christ.*

*To whom with thee, O Father,  
 and the Holy Ghost, the Comforter,  
 be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Ho-  
 nour, Glory, Might, Majesty, and  
 Dominion, both now and evermore.  
 Amen.*

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**F I N I S.**

